

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-10 are pending in the application. Claim 1 and 8 have been amended. Claim 2 has been cancelled. The amendment is fully supported by the original disclosure. No new matter has been introduced. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1 and 3-10 in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The rejection of claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. §102:

Claims 1-10 stand rejected as anticipated by Niedecker (U.S. Patent No. 4,307,489). Claim 2 has been cancelled so need not be considered further. Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's conclusion and traverses the rejection for the following reasons. For prior art reference to anticipate under 35 U.S.C. §102, each and every element of the claimed invention must be identically shown in the reference.

Regarding Applicant's amended independent claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Niedecker does not disclose the limitation in amended independent claim 1 reciting "wherein the spaced openings decrease in size as they near the discharge end." The Examiner has stated that the spaced openings of Niedecker decrease in size as they near the discharge end, however, Applicant can find no support in either the text of Niedecker nor the figures of Niedecker for this proposition. Applicant requests that if the Examiner is to maintain this objection, specific support in Niedecker be cited. In the absence of any such support, Applicant submits that independent claim 1 is not anticipated or rendered obvious by Niedecker.

Regarding independent claims 3 and 7, Applicant respectfully submits that Niedecker does not disclose the limitation in independent claims 3 and 7 requiring the function of "projecting jets of water towards and against a downstream

portion of the casing to slidably propel the casing." Likewise, independent claim 4 contains a similar limitation of spaced openings "adapted to project fluid against the casing so as to cause the casing to slidably propel longitudinally." Conversely, Niedecker is directed to a process and apparatus for "applying fluid to the outside surface of the artificial casing." See Niedecker at Col. 2, lines 27-32. Further, the Niedecker invention is described as relating to a process and apparatus for a preparatory treatment of artificial casings. See Col. 1, lines 6-9. Niedecker describes the application of the fluid through nozzle 14 as supplied with individual nozzles 15 to the outside surface of the artificial casing 3. See Col. 4, lines 48-57. However, there is no discussion or suggestion that the nozzles 15 could be used to propel the casing 3 as asserted by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant submits that independent claims 3, 4, and 7 are not anticipated or rendered obvious by Niedecker.

Likewise, dependent claims 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 are likewise not anticipated or rendered obvious by Niedecker, due to at least their dependence on independent claims 4 and 7, respectively.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant believes claims 1 and 3-10 are in condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests allowance of such claims.

If any issues remain that may be expeditiously addressed in a telephone interview, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at 515/558-0200. All fees or extensions of time believed to be due in connection with this response are attached hereto; however, consider this a request for any extension

inadvertently omitted, and charge any additional fees to Deposit
Account 50-2098.

Respectfully submitted,



Timothy J. Zarley
Reg. No. 45,253
ZARLEY LAW FIRM, P.L.C
Capital Square
400 Locust Street, Suite 200
Des Moines, IA 50309-2350
Phone No. (515) 558-0200
Fax No. (515) 558-7790
Customer No. 34082
Attorneys of Record

- jjl/bjs -